23: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940, 1953) 1964
SP22 Tapirape SP22

edited by

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In the Company of Man

Twenty Portraits of Anthropological Informants

[Title Page]

Ill: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940,1953) 1964
[P 399]
SP22 Tapirapé SP22

14

Champukwi of the Village of the Tapirs

Charles Wagley

13: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940,1953) 1964
SP22 Tapirape SP22

115 Champuki was not the first person who came to mind when a contribution to this volume was considered. I thought of Gregorio Martin, a dignified and wise old Mayan Indian of Santiago Chimaltenango in Guatemala, who in 1937 had taught me the way of life of his people. I thought of Camirang, the dynamic young chieftain whom I had known in 1941 in a village of Tenetehara Indians along the Pindaré River in northeastern Brazil. I thought also of Nhunduca, a gifted and witty storyteller from a small Amazon community, who in 1948 introduced me to the rich folklore of the Amazon *caboclo* or peasant. But then, among all the people I had known in the various primitive and peasant cultures in which I [954] have done ethnological research, I chose Champukwi, a man of no outstanding talent, yet talented all the same—a man of not the [123] highest prestige in his society, yet admired by all. For the brief span of about a year he was my most intimate friend.

115 I knew Champukwi some 20 years ago when I lived in his small 123 village of about 175 Tapirapé Indians in central Brazil. I must have [62] seen him at once, for presents were distributed to the whole popu- [62] lation on the day of my arrival in late April of 1939. But I did not [31] distinguish Champukwi as an individual, nor did he, at first, stand out in any way from the other men of his village. His name does not appear in the notes taken during my first month among the Tapirapé.

114 For me, and even more for Valentim Gomes, the Brazilian fron- [103] tiersman who was my companion and employee, the first weeks in the Village of the Tapirs, as the small settlement was known, were a period of grappling with a strange and often confusing world.

177 The Tapirapé Indians lived between the Araguaia and Xingú Rivers, [131] an area at that time almost entirely isolated from modern Brazil. They had been visited by only a few people from the "outside"—by one or two missionaries; by Herbert Baldus, a German-Brazilian anthropologist; and by a few frontiersmen from the Araguaia River. The nearest Brazilian settlement to the Village of the Tapirs was Furo de Pedra, a town of 400–500 persons that lay some 300 miles

away on the Araguaia River. Three Tapirapé youths had spent a few months at mission stations and thus spoke a rudimentary form of Portuguese, using a vocabulary limited to a few basic nouns and verbs. At first our main problem was communication, but these youths were able to help us. Aside from them, the only individuals we knew by name during the first two weeks were the "captains," the older men who were the heads of the six large haypile-like houses arranged in a circular village pattern. These, we later learned, were each occupied by a matrilocal extended family. But even the personal names—such as Oprunxui, Wantanamu, Kamanare, Mariapawungo, Okané, and the like—were then hard to remember, let alone pronounce.

During the first weeks in the Village of Tapirs, I began to study intensively the Tapirapé language, a language belonging to the widespread Tupí-Guaraní stock. Until I could use this language at least passably, I was limited to observing and recording only those forms of Tapirapé culture that the eye could see. Even these usually needed explaining. I visited the extensive Tapirapé gardens in which manioc, beans, peanuts, cotton, and other native American crops were grown. I watched the women fabricate flour from both poisonous and "sweet" varieties of manioc, and make pots out of clay. I watched the men weave baskets out of palm fiber and manufacture their bows and arrows as they sat in hammocks in the large palm-thatched structure in the center of the village circle. This building was obviously the men's club, for no women ever entered. I rapidly became accustomed to nudity. The women wore nothing at all, and the men only a palm fiber band around the prepuce. But even nude women could be modestly seated, and the men were careful never to remove their palm band to expose the glans penis. Obvious also to the uninstructed eye was the fact that the Tapirapé expressed their personal vanity in the elaborate designs carefully painted on their bodies with *rucu* (red) and *genipa* (black). These and many other overt aspects of Tapirapé culture could be recorded in notes and photographs while I studied their language.

The Tapirapé, a friendly and humorous people, seemed rather pleased with the curious strangers in their midst. They found our antics amusing; the gales of laughter that accompanied the conversations that we could hear but not understand seemed evoked by tales of our strange behavior. (It is so easy to presume that oneself is

the subject of conversation when listening to a strange language.) Then, of course, our presence was materially valuable—for the salt, knives, needles, beads, mirrors, and other presents we brought were greatly appreciated. However, within a very short time some of these people began to emerge as individuals. Awanchowa, a small boy of about 6, followed me about and literally haunted our little house, staring at our large bag of salt which he ate with the same relish children in other cultures eat sweets. Then there was Tanui, a woman of middle age (whose hair was cropped short indicating that a near relative had recently died) who often brought us presents of food. Gradually most of the villagers emerged as distinctive personalities and among them was Champukwi. I cannot remember when I first came to know him as an individual, but his name begins to appear regularly in my field notebooks about one month after our arrival. Soon, he became my best informant, and after a time, an inseparable companion.

In 1939 Champukwi must have been about 25 years of age. He was tall for a Tapirapé male, measuring perhaps about 5 feet 6 inches, strongly built but lean, and weighing, I should judge, about 150 lbs. Like all Tapirapé men he wore his hair in bangs across his forehead with a braided pigtail tied at the back of his neck. He was somewhat of a dandy, for his feet and the calves of his legs were painted bright red every evening with *rucu*. From time to time he painted an intricate design on his body, and he wore crocheted disc-like wrist ornaments of cotton string dyed red. He was obviously a man of some prestige among men of his age, for youths and younger men treated him with deference, always finding a seat for him on the bench that was built against one wall of our house. I soon learned that he, too, had spent a short period at a mission station several years earlier and that he knew a few words of Portuguese. He was married and had a daughter about 2 years of age. His wife, hardly attractive according to my American tastes, appeared to be somewhat older than he, and was pregnant when we first met.

Champukwi seemed more patient than other Tapirapé with my attempts to use his language and to seek information. He would repeat a word, a phrase, or a sentence several times so that I might write it down phonetically. He resorted to his meager Portuguese and even to mimicry to explain what was meant. His patience was of course

13: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940, 1953) 1964
SP22 Tapirape SP22

requited by gifts of beads, hardware, and salt which I provided judiciously from time to time. After a few days, I began noting questions to be asked of Champukwi in the late afternoon when he now habitually visited our house. But this was the time that others also liked to visit. At this hour of the day our house was often crowded with men, women, children, and even pets—monkeys, parrots, and wild pigs—for which the Tapirapé along with other Brazilian tribes have an especial fondness. Such social gatherings were hardly conducive to the ethnological interview or even to the systematic recording of vocabulary. So I asked Champukwi if I might go with him to his garden. There, alternating between helping him cut brush from his garden site and sitting in the shade, I was able to conduct a kind of haphazard interview. Often, while he worked, I formulated questions in my halting Tapirapé and I was able by repetition to understand his answers. Although the Tapirapé villagers began to joke of Champukwi's new garden site as belonging to the two of us, these days were very valuable for my research.

Walking through the forest to and from Champukwi's garden, we often hunted for *jacu*, a large forest fowl rather like a chicken. I attempted to teach Champukwi how to use my .22 rifle, but he had difficulty understanding the gunsights and missed continually. He attempted to show me how to "see" the *jacu* hidden in the thick branches of the trees, but I seldom caught sight of the birds until they had flown. Thus, our complementary incapacities combined to make our hunting in the tropical forest quite unproductive, and in disgust Champukwi often resorted to his bow and arrow. Only later in the year, after he had practiced a great deal by shooting at tin cans did Champukwi master the use of the rifle, and this new-found skill greatly added to his prestige among the Tapirapé.

My abiding friendship with Champukwi perhaps really began when I came down with malaria about six weeks after our arrival. During the first few days of my illness, I was oblivious to my surroundings. I am told that while one *panché*, or medicine man, predicted my death, another tried to cure me by massage, by blowing tobacco smoke over my body, and by attempting to suck out the "object" that was causing the fever. Evidently his efforts—plus the atabrine tablets administered by Valentim Gomes—were successful, for my fever abated. I realized, however, that convalescence would be slow. Unable to leave the house for almost three weeks, I spent my days

1114 and evenings suspended in a large Brazilian hammock. In this state of enervation, I must have been the very picture of the languid white [123] man in the tropics. Each late afternoon our house became a gather- [514] ing place for the Tapirapé villagers, who came not only to visit with me (communication was still difficult) but also with each other, and 123 to gaze upon the belongings of the *tori* (non-Indian). My illness 538 proved to be a boon for ethnographic research. People were more patient with the sick anthropologist than with the well one. They told stories, not only for my benefit, but also to entertain each other. [193] In attempting to explain to me about a mythological culture hero, a man would find himself telling a myth to the attending audience. Thus, I heard (and saw) Tapirapé stories told as they should be—as dramatic forms spoken with vivacity and replete with mimicry of the animals that are so often characters in these folktales. With my still imperfect knowledge of Tapirapé I inevitably lost the thread of the story and it had to be retold to me more slowly.

115 Champukwi was a frequent visitor during these days of my con- 123 valescence. He came each morning on the way to his garden and 124 he became accustomed to drinking morning coffee with us. And, [512] each late afternoon after he had returned from his garden, he came "to talk"—often slowly retelling the stories and incidents that I had difficulty understanding the evening before. Several days during this period he did not work in his garden but sat for two or three hours talking. He learned when he should pause or repeat a phrase or [212] sentence in order that I might take notes. He came to understand what writing meant, discovering that what I wrote in my notebook I could repeat to him later. In time he appreciated the fact that I was not so much interested in learning the Tapirapé language as I was in comprehending the Tapirapé way of life. As so often is the case when a person understands and speaks a foreign language poorly, one communicates best with but a single person who is accustomed to one's mistakes and one's meager vocabulary. Thus, I could understand and make myself understood to Champukwi better than any [192] other Tapirapé. Moreover, because he spent long hours in our house, [126] he was learning Portuguese from Valentim Gomes, and this was an aid in helping me translate newly learned words and phrases in Tapirapé and even helped me understand his explanations of Tapirapé culture patterns. Champukwi thus consciously became my teacher, and others came to realize that he was teaching me. During

13: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940, 1953) 1964
SP22 Tapirape SP22

the next two months we had daily sessions, some very brief and others lasting two or more hours.

In October of 1939, some six months after my arrival, I found it necessary to leave the Village of the Tapirs to go to Furo de Pedra for supplies and to collect mail that was held there for me. Valentim Gomes and I had come up the Tapirapé River, a tributary of the Araguaia, pulled by an outboard motor belonging to an anthropological colleague who had since returned to the United States. Now we had to paddle ourselves downstream. We could expect little help from the sluggish current and since the river was so low, it might be necessary to haul our canoe through shallows. Malaria had left me weak and I doubted that I was equal to this strenuous task. Several Tapirapé men, including Champukwi, were anxious to accompany us, but having Indians with us in Furo de Pedra was not advisable. First, they were susceptible to the common cold, which among relatively uncontaminated peoples such as these American aborigines often turns into a serious, and even fatal, disease. Second, unaccustomed to clothes, money, many foods, and other Brazilian customs and forms of etiquette, they would be totally dependent upon us during our stay in this frontier community. Nevertheless, the temptation to have my best informant with me during the trip and during our stay in Furo de Pedra was great and so we agreed to take Champukwi.

The trip was made slowly. Two good frontiersmen in a light canoe could have made it in three days, but we took eight. Champukwi was of little help in the canoe; unlike the riverine tribes the Tapirapé are a forest people who know little about the water, and few of them had ever traveled by canoe. Champukwi was unusual in that he could swim. Although he had more endurance than I, his efforts at paddling endangered the equilibrium of our canoe. However, he could shoot fish with his bow and arrow. The dry season had driven game from the open savanna which borders the Tapirapé River so that we were able to kill deer, *mutum* (another species of large forest fowl), and a wild goose to supplement the less palatable fare we had brought with us. Each night we camped on a beach from which we were able to collect the eggs of a small turtle, the *tracaja*, that had been buried in the sand. Only the mosquitoes which swarmed during sundown and early evening marred our trip. The experience remains one of the most memorable

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Champukwi on the Trip to Furo de Pedra.

of my life, a feeling that was shared, I believe, by Valentim Gomes and by Champukwi.

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Champukwi adjusted to Furo de Pedra with amazing rapidity. His short visit as a youth to the mission station undoubtedly contributed to his quick adaptation although, to be sure, there were minor problems and incidents. The Brazilians of Furo de Pedra were accustomed to Indians, for nearby there was a village of semi-civilized Caraja Indians who frequently visited and traded in the settlement. Yet, Champukwi was a bit of a curiosity—the townspeople had seen only one other Tapirapé. The local Brazilians invited him into their homes and offered him coffee and sweets. Both Valentim Gomes and I watched over his movements with all the anxiety of overprotective parents for fear that he might be exposed to a respiratory infection (he did not contract any) or that the hospitality of the local Brazilians might persuade him to drink *cachaça* (sugar cane *aguardiente*). Alcoholic beverages were unknown to the Tapirapé who are unlike most South American groups in this respect.

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[293]

13: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940,1953) 1964
SP22 Tapirape SP22

in this respect. According to Champukwi's own report, he tried *cachaça* only once in Furo de Pedra and (quite normally) found it distasteful and unpleasant. Yet there were moments that were awkward at the time however humorous they seem in retrospect. One day when I bought several dozen oranges in the street, Champukwi calmly removed the trousers that had been provided for him and made a sack to carry home the oranges by tying up the legs. In Furo de Pedra, he often went nude in the house we had rented for our stay. Even the Brazilian woman who came to prepare our meals became more or less accustomed to his nakedness, but sometimes he forgot to dress before sallying forth into the street. The rural Brazilian diét, derived in large measure from native Indian foods, seemed to please Champukwi, but he could not be comfortable eating at the table. He preferred during meals to sit across the room on a low stool.

Champukwi's reaction to this rural form of Brazilian civilization was not childlike in any way. He in turn became an ethnologist. He wanted to see the gardens that provided the food for so many people (Furo de Pedra had hardly more than 400 people at that time). He was fascinated by the sewing machines with which he saw the women working. He attended the Catholic ceremonies held in the little chapel. He saw pairs of men and women dance face to face in semblance of an intimate embrace. About these and other strange customs he had many questions. But like the inquisitive anthropologist who had come to live in his village, his own curiosity sometimes became obtrusive. He peered into the homes of people and sometimes entered uninvited. And he followed the Brazilian women to their rather isolated bathing spot in the Araguaia River to discover if there were any anatomical differences between these women and those in his village. He even made sexual advances to Brazilian women, actions which, if he had known, were very dangerous in view of the jealous zeal with which Brazilian males protect the honor of their wives and daughters. On the whole, however, Champukwi became quite a favorite of the local Brazilians during his two week visit to Furo de Pedra. His Portuguese improved while he visited in their homes, and he collected simple presents, such as fish hooks, bottles, tin cans, and the like, to take home with him. Even during this short period away from the village, my work with him continued. He told me of antagonisms, gossip, and schisms in the

Tapirapé village which he would have hesitated to relate on home grounds. He told me of adulterous affairs in process and of the growing determination among one group of kinsmen to assassinate Urukumu, the powerful medicine man, because they suspected him of performing death-dealing sorcery.

After two weeks in Furo de Pedra, I found that it would be necessary for Valentim Gomes and me to go to Rio de Janeiro. It was not possible for Champukwi to accompany us and so I arranged for two Brazilian frontiersmen to return him to a point on the Tapirapé River from which he could easily hike to his village in a day. Valentim and I then began our slow trip up the Araguaia River to the motor road and thence to Rio de Janeiro. Two months later, rid of malaria and with a new stock of supplies, we returned to spend the long rainy months from November until the end of May in the Village of the Tapirs. Champukwi was there to welcome us, and he came each day to help repair and enlarge our house. We easily fell into our former friendly relationship, now strengthened by the experience in common of the trip to Furo de Pedra and by the feeling which many anthropologists have shared with the people of their communities—that anyone who returns is an "old friend."

My return to the village that November marked, in a sense, the end of what might be called the first phase of my relationship with Champukwi as friend and as anthropological informant. During the course of at least 200 hours of conversation (many of which may be methodologically dignified as interviews), I had learned much about Champukwi as a person as well as about Tapirapé culture. I knew that as a small boy he had come from Fish Village, where his parents had died, to live in the Village of the Tapirs. He had lived with his father's younger brother, Kamaira, who was the leader of a large household. He even confided to me his boyhood name; Tapirapé change their names several times during their lifetimes and mention of a person's first childhood name, generally that of a fish, an animal, or simply descriptive of some personal characteristic, causes laughter among the audience and considerable embarrassment to the individual. I knew that Champukwi had been married before he took his current wife, and that his first wife had died in childbirth. He revealed that her kinsmen had gossiped that her death was caused by his lack of respect for the food taboos imposed

upon an expectant father. This same set of taboos now bothered him again. A series of foods, mainly meats and particularly venison, is prohibited to fathers of infants and to husbands of pregnant women. On two excursions to the savanna (which abounds with deer) Champukwi had eaten venison. Moreover, since the Tapirapé identified cattle with deer, and thus beef with venison, he had broken the taboo several additional times by partaking also of this forbidden meat. The rather scrawny conditon of his 2-year-old daughter, he feared, resulted from his faults. Just after our return to the village in early November, his wife gave birth to a second daughter. She had a difficult delivery, and he remembered his transgressions. Several village gossips, without knowing anything about his misdeeds, had nevertheless accused him of this breach of taboo.

Champukwi's home life was not a happy one. He was frequently in conflict with his second wife, who had, indeed, considerable basis for complaint. She could not claim that he was a poor provider, for Champukwi was a good hunter and a diligent gardener. But he confided to me that he did not find her attractive, or at least not as attractive as other women in the village. Champukwi had a lusty sense of humor and enjoyed joking with Valentim and me. In this mood he told of his many extramarital affairs, which were in truth but slightly concealed. I would in any event have heard of these liaisons; he gave his paramours beads which everyone in the village knew I had given him as presents. This practice caused trouble for the women because their husbands could readily identify the source of the gifts. It also created trouble for Champukwi at home. His wife complained of his affairs and on one occasion, according to Champukwi, she attacked him, grabbing him by his pigtail and squeezing his exposed testicles until he fell helpless into a hammock. On other occasions, she retaliated in a manner more usual for a Tapirapé woman—she simply refused to carry drinking water from the creek, to cook food for him, and to allow him to sleep in the hammock which she and Champukwi shared. For a Tapirapé man to carry drinking water, to cook, or to sleep on a mat is considered ridiculously funny. In other circumstances, Champukwi would have had to seek recourse with a female relative. However, to do so would be tantamount to a public announcement of his marital difficulties; the whole village would have known, to their considerable merriment and jest. But having *kori* friends in the village, Champukwi

½ [i.e. non-Indian — Analyst]

could come quietly to us at night to drink water, to ask for something to eat, and even to sleep in an extra hammock we had for visitors. His affairs were evidently extensive, for he once divided all of the adult women of the village into two categories—those "I know how to talk with" (i.e., to seduce) and those "I do not know how to talk with." There were many with whom he "could talk."

Unfortunately, by late November of 1939, I knew too much about Champukwi's affairs either for his comfort or for mine. His wife sometimes came to my house to ask if I knew where he had gone (I could generally guess), and once an irate husband even came to inquire of his whereabouts. His Don Juan activities had evidently increased. His friendship with me caused him trouble with other Tapirapé who were envious of the presents he received. The story was circulated that he had stolen a pair of scissors which, in fact, I had given to him. Moreover, several people caught colds, and he was accused of bringing the infection from Furo de Pedra (actually it was probably transmitted by the frontiersman who had helped transport us to the village in November). Champukwi sought revenge by cutting down one of the main supports of the men's house, which promptly caved in. No one died or was seriously injured and the destruction of the men's house was soon forgotten since it is normally rebuilt each year. However, people continued to criticize Champukwi, much of their criticism revolving around his relationship with me. There are no realms of esoteric secrets in Tapirapé culture (as there are in many cultures) that must not be revealed to an outsider; there is only the "secret" of the men from the women that the masked dancers are not supernatural beings but merely masquerading men, but I had been fully and openly brought into this "secret." I was, moreover, exceedingly careful in conversation never to refer to any bit of personal information that some informant, Champukwi or another, had told me. But rumors were rife in the small village—that I was angry and would soon leave (I was by then a valuable asset), that Champukwi told me lies about others, that I refused to give a bushknife to a household leader because Champukwi had urged me not to do so (I refused because I had already given him one bushknife), and the like.

Champukwi reacted moodily, often violently, to this situation. I could no longer count on his visits nor on our research interviews. He now visited us with a glum look on his face, and when he was

not at once offered coffee, he left offended. But the very next day he might return, gay and joking, yet without his former patience for teaching or explaining Tapirapé culture. Once he returned tired from a hunting trip, and, irritated by his wife, he beat her with the flat side of his bushknife and marched off in anger, thoughtfully taking the family hammock and a basket of manioc flour, to sleep four nights in the forest near his garden. Soon afterwards, he left his wife to take the wife of a younger man. This did not become a major scandal in the village. After some tense yet calm words between the two men, it seemed clear that the young woman preferred Champukwi and the abandoned husband peacefully moved into the men's house. Champukwi's former wife and their two young daughters continued to live with her relatives as is the Tapirapé rule. But the switch of spouses caused tension between Champukwi and his former wife's kinsmen, and between Champukwi and the abandoned husband's kinsmen; and, to multiply his woes, he now had a new set of in-laws to satisfy. For about a month thereafter I rarely saw Champukwi; he obviously avoided our house. When we met in the village or in the men's house, he simply said that he was busy repairing his house or hunting.

Discussing emotions with someone from a culture as widely different as Tapirapé is from my own was difficult, and the language barrier was still a real one. Although my Tapirapé vocabulary was increasing, it was hardly adequate to probe deeply into emotional responses; nor was Champukwi given to introspection. I shall probably never fully understand Champukwi's temporary rejection of me, but the cause was probably both sociological and psychological. First, his apparent influence with me and our close friendship had created antagonism on the part of other villagers. By rejecting the outsider, he now hoped to reinstate himself in his own society. A second, deeper and more personal reason, contributed to his rejection of me; he had told me too much about himself, and feared that he had lost face in the process. Also, it was obvious that I was growing less dependent upon him for knowledge as my facility with the language improved and my information about the culture grew. Finally, the rejection was not one-sided. Now additional informants were desirable for my research. Also, if I remember correctly (it is not stated in my notebooks), I was annoyed by Champukwi's neglect and disappointed by his lack of loyalty.

Charles Wagley

115 When the heavy rains of late December and January set in, we
123 were all more or less confined to the village as the rivers and streams
124 rose to flood the savanna. What had been brooks in the tropical
[132] forest became wide streams, difficult, and sometimes dangerous, to
[133] ford. It rained many hours each day. The Tapirapé women and children spent most of the time in their dwellings, and the men and older boys lounged in the men's house. Our house again became a meeting place. And as this was of course an opportune time for interviewing, I joined the men in their club or entertained visitors at home. I began to see more of Champukwi—first, in the men's house and then as he again became a regular visitor at our house. Now, he brought his new (and younger) wife with him. He liked to sit up with us late at night after the other Tapirapé visitors had retired to their dwellings or to the men's house for the night-long sings that are customary during the season of heavy rains. Under the light of our gasoline lamp, we again took up our study of Tapirapé culture. Not once did he mention his period of antagonism except to complain that the Tapirapé gossip too much.

Sometime late in January there began what might be considered the second phase of my relationship with Champukwi. Our friendship was no less intimate than before, but our conversations and more formal interviews were not now as frequent. During the next months, Champukwi became almost my assistant, an entrepreneur of
115 Tapirapé culture. He continued to provide invaluable information,
123 but when I became interested in a subject of which he knew little,
124 he would recommend that I talk to someone else. Though he directed
756 me to Urukumu on the subject of medicine men or shamans, Cham-
[754] pukwi himself related dreams he had heard other shamans tell. He
683 explained that he did not want to become a shaman himself, for he had seen grieved relatives beat out the brains of Tapirapé shamans whom they suspected of causing a death by sorcery. He was not cer-
[782] tain, he said, whether such shamans had actually performed sorcery;
[975] but he reasoned that any shaman might come to such an end.
[976] Champukwi did have the frequent dreams that are indicative of one's powers to become a shaman and, in some of his dreams, he saw *anchunga*, the ghosts and supernaturals who are the aids of shamans. He had told only one or two of his kinsmen about this, and he did not want it to be known throughout the village lest there be pressure on him to train for shamanism.

13: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940, 1953) 1964
SP22 Tapirape SP22

Champukwi of the Village of the Tapir

Champukwi sketched for me the stories of Petura, the Tapirapé ancestral hero who stole fire from the King Vulture, daylight from the night owl, *genipa* (used for dye) from the monkeys, and other items for the Tapirapé. However, he persuaded Maeumi, an elder famous for his knowledge of mythology, to relate the details although he himself helped considerably to clarify for me the meaning of native phrases and to make the stories told by Maeumi more fully understandable. Champukwi also forewarned me of events that I might want to witness, events that without his warning I might have missed. Such were the wrestling matches which took place upon the return of a hunting party between those men who went on the hunt and those who remained at home. He told me of a particularly handsome basket a man had made, which I might want to add to my collection for the Brazilian National Museum. He came to tell me that a young woman in a neighboring house was in labor, thus enabling me to get a photograph of the newborn infant being washed in the stream, and he urged the men to celebrate for my benefit a ceremony which might easily have been omitted. Champukwi was no longer merely an informant. He became a participant in ethnographic research although, of course, he never thought of it in these terms. He seemed somehow to understand the anthropologist's task in studying his culture, and in the process he gained considerable objectivity about his own way of life.

Yet it must be said that Champukwi did not seem to discredit the norms, institutions, and beliefs of his own people. Although he saw Valentim and me walk safely down the path through the forest late at night, he steadfastly refused to do the same; for the path was a favorite haunt of the lonely ghosts of deceased Tapirapé who might harm the living. He reasoned that the *tori* were probably immune to this danger. When he was ill, he took the pills we urged upon him but he also called in the shaman. His curiosity about airplanes, automobiles, and "gigantic canoes" (passenger boats) which he saw pictured in the magazines we had brought with us, was great; but he boasted that the Tapirapé could walk farther and faster than any *tori* or even the Caraja (who are a canoe people). In fact, his interest in, and enthusiasm for, certain Tapirapé activities seemed to be heightened by our presence. Almost all Tapirapé ceremonials involve choral singing and Champukwi was a singing leader of one of the sections of the men's societies. He was always pleased when

Charles Wagley

115 123 [526] [186] 122 123 [101] 122 123 881 [171] [301] [302] 122 123 [501] [481]

He was always pleased when we came to listen, particularly if we made the motions of joining in. He was an excellent wrestler in Tapirapé style, in which each opponent takes a firm grip on the pigtail of the other and attempts to throw him to the ground by tripping. Our wrestling match was brief although I was much taller than he; and his match with Valentim Gomes, who outweighed him by more than forty pounds, was a draw. Unlike so many who get a glimpse at a seemingly "superior" cultural world, Champukwi never became dissatisfied with his own way of life.

In June of 1940, my period of residence among the Tapirapé Indians ended. The waters on the savanna which had to be crossed afoot to get to the Tapirapé River where our canoe was moored had not completely receded. Many Tapirapé friends, among them Champukwi, offered to carry our baggage, made lighter after a final distribution of gifts, down to the river. The night before our departure a festival with the usual songfest was held to celebrate the final phase of a ceremony during which a youth, this time the nephew of Kamiraho, became a man. Some Brazilian tribes make this occasion an ordeal by such means as applying a frame of stinging wasps to the body of the novice, but it is characteristic of the Tapirapé that the "ordeal" consists only of decorating the youth with a headdress of magnificent red macaw feathers, painting his body elaborately, and making him the center of dancing and singing—although the youth must himself dance continuously for a day and a night. Champukwi led the singing most of the night, but at dawn he came to our house to supervise the packing of our belongings into the basket-like cases made of palm which are used for carrying loads of any kind. He divided the baggage among the younger men. Even some of the older household leaders decided to accompany us but they, of course, did not carry anything. Our trip was slow because everyone was tired after the all-night festival and because of the water through which we had to wade. At one point, rafts had to be made to transport our baggage across a still-swollen stream. Since the Tapirapé do not swim—or, like Champukwi, they swim but poorly—it was the job of the *tori* to swim and push the rafts. I had the honor of swimming across the stream, pushing the respected chieftain, Kamiraho. (How he got back, I shall never know.) After a day and a half, we reached the landing on the Tapirapé River, and the next

morning we embarked downriver. My last memory of Champukwi was of him standing on the bank waving in *tori* style until our boat made the curve of the river.

I did not return to visit the Tapirapé until 1953, but news of them came to me at intervals. Valentim Gomes returned to the region in 1941 as an officer of the Brazilian Indian Service, and his post was charged with the protection of the Tapirapé Indians. In his first year in this capacity, he wrote me: "I report that I was in the village of the Tapirapé on the 26th of July [1941]. They were in good health and there were plenty of garden products such as manioc, yams, peanuts, and the like. There were plenty of bananas. But I am sorry to say that after we left them, twenty-nine adults and a few children have died. Fifteen women and fourteen men died. Among those who died was Champukwi, the best informant in the village, and our best friend." Several slow exchanges of letters brought further details from Valentim. In some manner, perhaps through a visit from a Brazilian frontiersman, several Tapirapé had contracted common colds. Its fatalness to them is indicated by the name they give it—*ó-ó* (*ó* is the augmentative which might be translated as "big, big"). Since they have no knowledge of the process of contagion and have not acquired immunity to the common cold, the disease spread rapidly throughout the village. The Tapirapé realized, I knew, that colds and other diseases such as measles which they had suffered before, were derived from visitors. Yet they also believed that death resulted from evil magic or sorcery. Why do some people who are very sick from colds get well, they asked, while others who are no more ill, soon die? It is only because those who die are the victims of sorcery, they had explained to me. So, following many deaths, including that of a young man like Champukwi, who enjoyed prestige and had many kinsmen, I was not surprised to learn from Valentim Gomes that the powerful shaman, Urukumu, had been assassinated. As Champukwi had told me, suspicion of Urukumu had already been growing even during my residence in the village. After the death of Champukwi, one of his many "brothers" (actually a cousin but called by the same term as brother in Tapirapé) had entered Urukumu's house late at night and clubbed him to death. To the Tapirapé, grief and anger are closely related

Charles Wagley

To the Tapirapé, grief and anger are closely related emotions and there is one word, *iwúterahú*, that describes either or both states of mind. Thus in both word and deed grief can be quickly transformed into vengeful anger.

In 1953, when I returned to the Araguaia River, I found only fifty persons, the remnants of the Tapirapé tribe, settled under the protection of the Brazilian Indian Service in a small village near the mouth of the Tapirapé River. My old companion, Valentim Gomes, was the Indian officer in charge. The history of the intervening years had been a tragic story; the Tapirapé had suffered steady depopulation from imported diseases and they had been attacked by the warlike and hostile Kayapo tribe, who had burned their village and carried off several younger women. They had been forced to leave their own territory to seek the protection of the Indian Service, and then cattle ranchers encroached upon the Tapirapé savannas, once rich with game. Champukwi was but one of the many victims of this disintegration of Tapirapé society. Upon my arrival several of Champukwi's surviving relatives met me with the traditional "welcome of tears"; to the Tapirapé, such a return mixes emotions of joy at seeing an old friend with the sadness of the memory of those who have died during the interim. Both the sadness and the joy are expressed almost ritually by crying. People spoke sympathetically to me of the loss of my friend and they brought a young man, who had been but a small boy in 1940, but who was now known as Champukwi. This boy had visited for many months, and had even studied a little, with the Dominican missionaries on the lower Araguaia River; he therefore spoke Portuguese well. He remembered my friendship with his namesake and perhaps felt, as I did, some strange bond between us. So again for a few days the name of Champukwi was entered into my notebook as my source of information on Tapirapé culture.

In the security of our studies and in the classroom, we claim that anthropology is a social science in which regularities of human behavior and of social systems are studied. But, at its source, in the midst of the people with whom the anthropologist lives and works, field research involves the practice of an art in which emotions, subjective attitudes and reactions, and undoubtedly subconscious motivations participate. Of course, the well-trained anthropologist takes all possible precautions to be objective and to maintain a detached attitude. He gathers information from a "cross section" of

13: Wagley E-5 (1939-1940, 1953) 1964
SP22 Tapirape SP22

the population—from a variety of informants selected for their different status positions in their society. He interviews, as far as is possible, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, individuals of high and low status, so that his picture of the culture may not be distorted. The anthropologist might (he seldom has done so) go so far as to keep a record of his subjective reactions in an attempt to achieve greater objectivity. Yet he is never the entirely detached observer he may fancy himself to be—nor am I sure that this should be so. Anthropological field research is a profoundly human endeavor. Faced over a long period by a number of individuals, some intelligent and some slow, some gay and some dour, some placid and some irritable, the anthropologist almost inevitably is involved in a complex set of human relations among another people just as he is by virtue of his membership in his own society. And each anthropologist is a distinctive personality and each undoubtedly handles in his own way his dual role as a sympathetic friend to key informants and as a scientific observer of a society and culture which is not his own. To me, Champukwi was, above all, a friend whom I shall remember always with warm affection. [15]